

HB 455 - Dave Skinner

I'm struck how this bill mandates setbacks on the mainstem rivers.

Most non-point water pollution happens on the tributaries. Dirty creeks mean a dirty river, clean creeks a clean river. Period. And guess what, we've already dealt with that in Western Montana with our forestry BMPs. They work pretty well, thanks.

Montana has also already dealt with water protection through our lakeshore protection laws, which are, thank goodness, limited to the actual effects of construction on lakeshores and lake water bodies.

I understand that similar setbacks have been implemented in the Big Hole. That's their right to do so, if that's what landowners find reasonable and prudent, and furthermore if there is good, solid science to back up taking such steps.

But HB 455 simply paints a red line of prohibition all at once on thousands of miles of river without clear need of doing so. It is therefore an arbitrary and capricious taking of property on a massive scale, for comparatively little marginal benefit.

Really, what's the real point of this bill? So river floaters can pretend they are Lewis and Clark? There needs to be a better reason than that.